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THE MARKING SYSTEM OF THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION BOARD, L. THOMAS HOPKINS: Harvard Monographs in Education, Series 1, No. 2, October, 1921.

The need for standardization of marking systems, their unscientific, subjective and almost meaningless character, have often been shown in recent years, since Cattell, in 1905, first began to study them. This monograph is an investigation of the distribution of the marks of the College Entrance Board for the years from 1902 to 1920 inclusive, with a view to discovering the grounds for the vigorous criticisms of college entrance examinations by New England teachers. The subjects selected were English readings, elementary French, elementary algebra, and plane geometry, since they were offered by nearly all candidates and furnish a large number of cases.

The two significant facts disclosed are (a) that almost every distribution out of the seventy-six plotted is bimodal, and (b) that almost every distribution is skewed negatively or toward the lower end of the curve. The distribution of 445,620 marks is as follows:

90-100	75-89	60-74	50-59	0-49
4.78%	18.34%	31.14%	13.78%	31.96%

Even when the distribution is plotted for only those candidates recommended as possessing full and satisfactory preparation, it is still bimodal and negatively skewed as shown for 87,642 marks:

90-100	75-89	60-74	50-59	0-49
6.35%	22.32%	32.28%	13.69%	25.36%

The College Entrance Board marks thus show a wide divergence in distribution from the one expected, and almost always found, when a fairly large number of students are graded. School and university marks have been shown, over and over again, to approximate the normal distribution represented by the bell shaped probability curve. More exact measurements of physical and mental traits approximate the normal curve. The marking system of the Board certainly calls for explanation and investigation and the method of reading and scoring the papers for revision.

The reliability and validity of any examination are, however, not shown by conformity to the normal distribution or any other curve, but by the correlations with future performance. Kelley, Pressey, and others pointed out the inadequacy of conformity to the normal distribution as a measure of the reliability of tests. Pressey argues that the bimodal distribution is the

desirable one provided assured successes are at one end of the curve and the potential failures at the other. The real problem, then, is whether the college entrance examinations are adequate to the task of selecting those who are qualified for college work and eliminating those who will fail. The accumulating evidence goes to show that their predictive value for this purpose is much too low to inspire confidence. The author of this monograph is no doubt aware that this is the vital issue though his discussion is limited to the character of the distribution of marks and the suggestion that "some approximation to the normal curve offers the best basis for solving present irregularities."

University of Wisconsin
January 23, 1922

V. A. C. HENMON

FRANCE, PREMIÈRE ANNÉE DE FRANÇAIS. Méthode directe de français avec notation phonétique par MME ET M. G. H. CAMERLYNCK. Pp. IX+220+58 pp. of vocabulary. Allyn and Bacon 1921.

This book, which is evidently an American edition of the volume published in France by Didier in 1919, has a double interest for Americans at present, as M. Camerlynck, who is a well known teacher in France, was official interpreter for the French delegates to the Disarmament Conference.

The authors describe the book as a *Première Année de Français*, and state that it is equally useful for all students of any country, who wish to learn French. From the subject matter, however, it would seem to be best fitted for use in Junior High Schools or in first year classes where the students are immature.

The first twenty lessons are considered preparatory lessons and give the concrete vocabulary of the class-room and the simple expressions of every day life. Then follows narrative material concerning the daily experiences of the Richard family.

The authors expressly say that the book does not aim to replace the teacher. The vocabulary of each lesson is to be taught in class before the books are opened, using such direct method devices as are familiar to all. The book is intended particularly for home use, to aid the pupil in his review and study of what has been taught in class. After each lesson there is a *devoir* consisting of questions on the text and exercises involving drill in grammar. Understanding of the text is to be considered as a minimum requirement. The ideal that the authors seek is to have the pupil not only know what is in the book, but to work it over so thoroughly that it becomes to him a usable possession.